

Abstract

A punch tool including a punch driver and a punch element. The punch element can include a punch secured to a punch holder, with the punch holder and punch slidably disposed within a punch guide. The effective length of the punch tool can be increased by rotating the punch driver about threads relative to the punch element. The punch tool includes a latch mechanism for preventing rotation of the punch driver relative to the punch element when the latch is in a locked position, but allowing such rotation when the latch is in an unlocked position, thereby controlling unwanted free rotation of the punch driver relative to the remainder of the punch tool. During punching operation, the punch driver, punch holder, and punch are forced slidably relative to the outer punch guide. When a length adjustment is desired, the punch driver can be rotated relative to the punch, punch holder, and punch guide, which typically do not rotate. A locking disk can be rotatably secured to the punch driver. One punch tool locking disk has downwardly open cavities for receiving an upwardly protruding latching member which can be downwardly retracted to allow free rotation of the locking disk. Another punch tool locking disk has radially inwardly extending cavities or indents, and a latching member which can be positioned to block or allow passage of the non-indented portions past the latching member. The latching mechanism provided is isolated from the punch driver by springs, and easily accessible to operators from the side.

::ODMA\PCDOCS\FBDOCS1\2541094\7